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Cable dated:2009-12-24T08:27:00C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KAMPALA 001413SIPDISE.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/24TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL UC

1. (C) Summary: Parliamentary sponsor of the anti-homosexuality bill, David Bahati, told PolOffs on December 15 that he is open to minor changes.

Bahati Unrepentant

2. (C) PolOffs met with Bahati on December 15 to provide recent statements by Rick Warren and others against the anti-homosexuality bill. At the meeting, Bahati expressed disappointment with Rick Warren's letter against the bill and said Ugandan church leaders are in a similar position.

3. (U) Bahati described the bill as a "proposal", solicited recommendations for "improving" the legislation, and appeared moderately open to suggestions for changes.

4. (C) Bahati expressed profound disappointment with Rick Warren's letter against the billXXXXXXXXXX and said Ugandan church leaders are in a similar position. KAMPALA 00001413 002 OF 004

5. (C) Bahati's reasoning for introducing the bill alternated between protecting children from sexual predators, eradicating Uganda of homosexuality, and protecting the rights of the majority.

One-Sided Human Rights Debate

6. (C) On December 18, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) organized - with support from the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights - a public hearing on the bill.

7. (C) Bahati's remarks mirrored his private statements to PolOffs. Bahati also attacked the White House statement opposing the bill, saying that the U.S. was interfering in Uganda's internal affairs.

8. (C) Kato delivered a well-written speech defending the rights of gay and lesbians in Uganda. However, his words were nearly indecipherable due to poor audio quality.

Buturo - He's Back

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9. XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Parliamentary Debate in March or April

10. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXX reaffirmed that Bahati's bill is not a priority and that debate on the legislation will likely not begin until March or April.

11. (C) Bahati tried to shift the bill from the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee to the more favorable Presidential and Foreign Affairs Committee.

Opposition Concerns

12. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXXX told PolOff XXXXXXXXXXXXX. In September, Otunnu accused state security services of running a smear campaign about his sexual orientation.

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curtail presidential campaign activities.

13. (SBU) XXXXXXXXXXXXX said the opposition FDC fears Uganda will use the anti-homosexuality legislation against Besigye, and recalled government promises to hold free and fair elections.

Comment: Homophobic Demagogues

14. (C) Recent condemnations by Warren and other U.S. based individuals have further isolated Bahati. His homophobia, however, is blinding and self-destructive. LANIER